

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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P R 291250Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 267

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10202

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IN, US

SUBJ: INDIAN PERCEPTIONS OF US INVOLVEMENT IN THE
CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS

SUMMARY. FOLLOWING THE PROCLAMATION OF THE STATE OF
EMERGENCY ON JUNE 26, THE UNITED STATES CAME UNDER
ATTACK FROM SENIOR INDIAN POLITICAL LEADERS AND THE
PRESS WITH ALLEGATIONS THAT WE WERE SUPPORTING AND
ENCOURAGING MRS GANDHI'S DOMESTIC ENEMIES. BY IMPLICA-
TION THE US WAS THEREFORE AT LEAST SAID TO BE PARTIALLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOI'S HAVING TO PROCLAIM THE
EMERGENCY AND SUSPEND CIVIL LIBERTIES. THE PM HERSELF
MADE INDIRECT REFERENCES TO THE US IN THIS CONTEXT.
THESE ACCUSATIONS GAVE RISE TO REPRESENTATIONS AT HIGH
USG LEVELS TO THE GOI BOTH IN DELHI AND IN WASHINGTON.
WHILE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS
SAID AND WHAT MAY BE PRIVATELY BELIEVED, WE FIND
THAT DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS THE VOLUME OF ANTI-
US MATERIAL IN THE DAILY PRESS HAS FALLEN OFF SHARPLY
(THE CPI WEEKLIES HAVE CONTINUED THE CIA THEME, BUT
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ALSO LESS STRIDENTLY) AND THERE HAS BEEN A MARKED DECLINE

IN ANTI-US ACCUSATIONS BY SENIOR POLITICAL LEADERS. A TESTED SOURCE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSEHOLD ASSURES US THAT MRS GANDHI HERSELF ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESTRAINT. MRS GANDHI'S DECISION MAY HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY THE USG'S OBVIOUS EFFORT TO AVOID EMBARRASSING HER BY PUBLIC STATEMENTS; OR SHE MAY WANT OUR HELP LATER THIS YEAR; OR SHE MAY DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE "RIGHT" AND "CENTRIST" FORCES IN THE CONGRESS. WHATEVER THE REASONS--THOUGH THE FAULTY VALVES IN THE INDIAN VERBAL FAUCETS WILL CONTINUE TO LET THROUGH A TRICKLE OF VENOM REGARDLESS OF OFFICIAL POLICY--WE SEEM TO HAVE ENTERED A PERIOD OF RESPITE IN DOMESTIC PROPAGANDA ATTACKS ON THE US. END SUMMARY.

1. GIVEN THE FREQUENCY OF ANTI-US COMMENTS BY SENIOR GOI AND CONGRESS PARTY OFFICIALS DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS AFTER THE EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED, THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAVE BEEN TAME BY COMPARISON. THE ONLY MINISTERIAL ATTACK ON THE US WITHIN THE MORE RECENT PERIOD WAS FROM PRO-CPI LABOR MINISTER RAGHUNATHA REDDY ON JULY 14 WHEN HE ACCUSED THE CIA OF SEEKING TO DESTABILIZE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SO AS TO BE ABLE TO INSTALL ITS OWN HENCHMEN.

2. AT THE STATE GOVERNMENT LEVEL, A LOW LEVEL OF NOISE DOES STILL CONTINUE. ANDHRA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER J. VENGAL RAO, WHO HAS BEEN IN THE VANGUARD IN ATTACKING THE US, ON JULY 23 SAID THAT THE VOA, ALONG WITH THE BBC, CHINA, AND PAKISTAN, WAS "DISTORTING FACTS ABOUT THE SITUATION TO MALIGN THE PRIME MINISTER." IN TWO STATE LEGISLATURES--RAJASTHAN AND WEST BENGAL--DURING DEBATE THIS WEEK ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO MAKE THE STATE OF EMERGENCY NON-JUSTICIABLE, THE CHIEF MINISTERS SOUGHT TO INVOLVE THE US IN THE CURRENT SITUATION. THE CM F RAJASTHAN REFERRED TO THE EFFORTS OF CERTAIN AGENCIES TO UPSET GOVERNMENTS AND MENTIONED THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO PAKISTAN BY THE US. THE CM OF WEST BENGAL MADE THE SAME KIND OF INNUENDOS BY CLAIMING THAT THE 1974 RAIL STRIKE WAS LIKE THE TRANSPORT WORKERS' STRIKE IN

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CHILE.

3. WHILE HER PRINCIPAL SUBORDINATES HAVE TAPERED OFF IN THEIR ANTI-US ACCUSATIONS, PRIME MINISTER GANDHI HERSELF CONTINUES TO BE AMBIVALENT IN COMMENTING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTERNAL SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MEXICAN JOURNALISTS ON JULY 23, MRS GANDHI SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SAY "WHAT PART"

THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN AGAINST THE COI'S POLICY OF NONALIGNMENT "ARE PLAYING IN THE PRESENT CONDITIONS" AND SHE TOLD AN AMERICAN VISITOR THERE HAD BEEN FOREIGN GOVERNMENT MONEY GIVEN TO SOME OPPOSITION LEADERS. IN ALL OF HER REMARKS, THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUES TO EXHIBIT EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM IN THE FOREIGN, PARTICULARLY THE WESTERN, PRESS (SEE NEW DELHI 10064).

4. THE MOST DRAMATIC CHANGE IN THE LEVEL OF ANTI-US ALLEGATIONS IS IN THE DAILY PRESS. WHILE THE COMMUNIST DAILIES ARE QUICK TO REPRODUCE US DATELINED STORIES CONCERNING THE CIA, THEY HAVE FOR THE MOST PART AVOIDED ALLEGING US INVOLVEMENT IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. THE NEW DELHI CPI DAILY "PATRIOT" HAS BECOME ABSOLUTELY DULL FOR READERS ACCUSTOMED TO ANTI-US ATTACKS, AND AN ARTICLE LAST WEEKEND ON A RECENT ANTI-FASCIST MEETING MANAGED TO GET PRINTED WITHOUT EVEN A PASSING INNUENDO AGAINST THE US. THE EXCEPTION TO ALL THIS (WHETHER IT IS THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE OR DESTROYS IT IS NOT CLEAR) IS TH LEFTIST PRESS IN TAMIL NADU. THE TAMIL DAILY "SENGODI" ON JULY 26 FRONT-PAGES AN ARTICLE WHICH ALLEGES THT THE GOI IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING CLOSING US CONSULATES IN INDIA BECAUSE OF CIA ACTIVITY. THE US EMBASSY ALSO IS SAID TO BE UNDER STRICT SURVEILLANCE BY THE GOI. ANOTHER TAMIL LEFTIST DAILY, "MAKKAL KURAL", PUBLISHED A INTERVIEW WITH A PONDICHERRY CPI LEADER WHO ALLEGES THAT THE CIA IS SUPPORTING REACTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE OUT-LAWED RSS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10202

5. FOR SOME REASON NOT CLEAR TO US, THE LEFTIST WEEKLIES HAVE FELT THAT THEY ENJOY A GREATER LICENSE TO ATTACK THE US THAN THEIR DAILY COLLEAGUES. THE PRO-CPI "NEW WAVE"; THE CPI'S OFFICIAL ORGAN, "NEW AGE"; "BLITZ" AND "LINK" HAVE ALL IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS ALLEGED SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES BY THE CIA OR THE USG. FOR EXAMPLE, THE JULY 26 ISSUE OF "BLITZ" REFERS TO THE "SECRET VISIT (OF RICHARD HELM) TO INDIA LAST YEAR", SAYING THAT "THIS LENDS WEIGHT TO THE PM'S CALL IN HER RECENT SPEECHES FOR CONTINUED VIGILANCE."

6. ONE SOURCE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSEHOLD ASSURES US THAT ALL THIS STEMS FROM AN INSTRUCTION FROM THE PM TO HER SENIOR ASSOCIATES IN CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT TO RESTRAIN THEIR REMARKS ON MATTERS AFFECTING FOREIGN POLICY, AND ON PUBLIC MATTERS OUTSIDE THEIR PROFESSIONAL PURVIEW ALTOGETHER. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FAULTY VALVES IN THE INDIAN VERBAL FAUCETS WILL CONTINUE TO LET THROUGH A TRICKLE OF VENOM REGARDLESS OF WHAT OFFICIAL POLICY MAY BE. AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE TAPS CAN BE TURNED BACK ON AS QUICKLY AS THEY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TURNED

OFF. NEVERTHELESS FOR
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THE TIME BEING, WE HAVE ENTERED A PERIOD OF RESPITE IN ATTACKS ON THE US WHICH WE ATTRIBUTE TO OUR MESSAGE GETTING THROUGH. OTHERS HAVE NOTICED THIS AS WELL AND FOR A CHANGE THE DELHI RUMOR MILL (AND IN SOME OF THE STATES AS WELL) IS TURNING OUT STORIES THAT MRS GANDHI HAS TURNED AWAY FROM THE COMMUNISTS AND TOWARDS THE AMERICANS.

7. MRS GANDHI OF COURSE HAS HER OWN MOTIVES FOR KEEPING THE ANTI-US DOGS AT BAY. PARTLY THEY MAY BE THAT THE USG HAS OBVIOUSLY MADE AN EFFORT TO AVOID EMBARRASSING HER BY PUBLIC STATEMENTS. PARTLY THAT SHE MAY WANT OUR HELP LATER THIS YEAR. PARTLY THAT SHE WANTS TO AVOID CONVEYING THE IMPRESSION THAT HER EMERGENCY ACTIONS ARE DICTATED BY THE SOVIETS OR CPI AND TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR HER FROM THE "RIGHT" AND "CENTRIST" WINGS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY. AND THERE MAY BE AND PROBABLY ARE MORE ARCAINE OR PERSONAL REASONS OF WHICH WE AT

THIS POINT CANNOT EVEN GUESS.
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